

Amendment under 37 CFR §1.111
Application No. 10/583,660
Attorney Docket No. 062668

REMARKS

- (1) Claims 1-6 are pending in this application, of which claims 1-3 have been amended, and claims 4-6 have been added.
- (2) Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Matsuyama et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,327,379 B2). Item 4 of the outstanding Office Action.
- (3) Claim 1 has been amended. The amendment of claim 1 is supported at page 8, lines 15-19; and page 12, lines 5-14 of the original specification. Note that the “inside area data generation means” is described at page 8, line 15; the “outside area data generation means” is described at page 11, lines 21-22; the “inside determination means” is described at page 11, line 11; and the “outside determination means” is described at page 13, line 17.
- (4) The Examiner states that Matsuyama et al. disclose all the limitations of the invention recited in original claims. In particular, the Examiner states that “an inspection data generation means for generating inspection data in the inside (pattern image fig 4, element 21) and outside of a pattern area to be inspected (pattern outside is auxiliary pattern, fig 4, element 22).” It appears that the Examiner considers that element 21 of Matsuyama et al. corresponds to the “inside area” of a pattern to be inspected, and that element 22 of Matsuyama et al. corresponds to the “outside area” of the pattern.

Matsuyama et al. disclose as Field of the Invention that in order to avoid a phenomenon that the corners of a pattern 11 are round, an auxiliary pattern 12 are formed at a respective corner of the rectangular pattern 10. *See* col. 1, lines 17-30. In the inspection taught by Matsuyama et al., the image of the auxiliary pattern is deleted, and the image obtained from deleting the auxiliary pattern is inspected. *See* col. 2, lines 18 to 33. As illustrated in Figs. 4 and 6A, the auxiliary pattern 22 is positioned only at each corner of the pattern image 21. The auxiliary pattern does not surround the image pattern 21. In addition, the auxiliary pattern 22 of Matsuyama et al. is removed to inspect the image (col. 2, lines 31-33). In other words, the auxiliary pattern 22 is an area to be excluded from the inspection in Matsuyama et al.

On the contrary, in amended claim 1, the outside area surrounds the inside area of the pattern area to be inspected. In amended claim 1, the pattern area can be inspected in such a manner that the outside area of the pattern area is strictly inspected in order to avoid a short circuit with the adjacent pads or wiring patterns while the inside area of the pattern area is inspected under a relaxed inspection standard. As disclosed in Fig. 3, the outside area 22a surrounds the inside area 21b. As described at page 4, line 24 to page 5, line 6 of the original specification, a stricter inspection reference can be applied to the outside area than to the inside area, as recited in newly added claim 4. Therefore, the invention recited in claims 1 or 4 is

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different from Matsuyama et al. Thus, the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) is not supported by Matsuyama et al.

Moreover, amended claim 1 additionally has incorporate the limitations of “the inside area data generation means performing a reduction processing of the inside area to generate the first inspection data,” and “the outside area data generation means performing an expansion processing of the outside area to generate the second inspection data.” There features are not disclosed or suggested by the references.

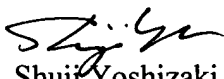
(5) Newly added claim 4 is supported at page 4, line 24 to page 5, line 6 of the original specification. Newly added claims 5 and 6 are supported at page 12, line 5 to page 13, line 25 of the original specification. The features recited in these claims are not disclosed by the references.

(6) In view of above, Applicant submits that the claims, as herein amended, are in condition for allowance. Applicant requests such action at an early date. If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

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If this paper is not timely filed, Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,
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